

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this eighth day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and sixth.

RONALD REAGAN

Proclamation 4857 of September 14, 1981

Yorktown Bicentennial

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

On October 19, 1781, the British forces under Lord Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown, Virginia, to General Washington and our French allies. That surrender signified the practical end of the struggle by our forefathers for liberty and independence. The impossible dream of those patriots was about to be transformed into the reality of a bright new Nation.

As the King's troops came slowly down the road to the surrender field, legend has it that they struck up the tune, "The World Turned Upside Down." And, indeed, the old order was to be turned upside down, for the creative powers of democracy were about to be released on an unsuspecting world.

This year marks the two hundredth anniversary of the surrender. October 19, 1781, was a major date in the development of America and her freedoms; and today, two centuries later, it remains an important reminder of our identity as a nation. The anniversary is also an appropriate time to recall the assistance France gave to America's revolutionary struggle. We, as Americans, are the product of many victories, many sacrifices, and many hopes. The campaign at Yorktown is a historic example.

The Congress has enacted a joint resolution (Public Law 96-414) designating October 19, 1981, as a "Day of National Observance of the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the Surrender of Lord Cornwallis to General George Washington at Yorktown, Virginia." It is fitting that we reflect upon our victory at Yorktown and commemorate it in such a manner as to inspire love of country and devotion to ideals by recalling to this generation the struggles of the past. We can do this at the same time as we give thanks for the great bond of friendship which exists between ourselves and Great Britain.

94 Stat. 1424.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Monday, October 19, 1981, as a day of national observance to remember and to honor the sacrifice of our ancestors in their quest for the political freedom that we enjoy today. I urge all Americans to celebrate again the joyous victory of our forefathers and I urge appropriate officials of the Federal, State, and local governments, as well as private organizations, to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

Editorial Note: The President's statement of September 8, 1981, on the death of Roy Wilkins, is printed in the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* (vol. 17, p. 947).

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 14th day of Sept., in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and sixth.

RONALD REAGAN

Proclamation 4858 of September 16, 1981

Citizenship Day and Constitution Week, 1981

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Daniel Webster once wrote, "We may be tossed upon an ocean where we can see no land—nor, perhaps, the sun or stars. But there is a chart and a compass for us to study, to consult, and to obey. The chart is the Constitution."

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September 17, 1981, marks the 194th anniversary of our Constitution. Its Framers scarcely could have conceived of the timelessness of the document they so carefully drafted. They prepared a Constitution to meet the needs of a fledgling nation. Yet today, amid the complexities of the twentieth century, that same Constitution, with only several amendments, serves a nation whose territory spans a continent and whose population exceeds two hundred and twenty-five million. With the passing of each year, it becomes increasingly evident that, in the words of Chief Justice John Marshall, our Constitution will "endure for ages to come."

The Constitution establishes the Congress, the Executive, and the Judiciary, and through a deliberate allocation of authority, it defines the limits of each upon the others. It particularizes the liberties which, as free men and women, we insist upon, and it constrains both Federal and State powers to ensure that those precious liberties are faithfully protected. It is our blueprint for freedom, our commitment to ourselves and to each other.

It is by choice, not by imposition, that the Constitution is the supreme law of our Land. As we approach the bicentennial of this charter, each of us has a personal obligation to acquaint ourselves with it and with its central role in guiding our Nation. While a constitution may set forth rights and liberties, only the citizens can maintain and guarantee those freedoms. Active and informed citizenship is not just a right; it is a duty.

In recognition of the paramount importance of the Constitution to our Nation, and in recognition of all who have attained the status of United States citizens, the Congress by joint resolution on February 29, 1952 (36 U.S.C. Section 153), designated September 17th as Citizenship Day, and by joint resolution of August 2, 1956 (36 U.S.C. Section 159), requested the President to proclaim the week beginning September 17th and ending September 23rd of each year as Constitution Week.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, call upon appropriate Government officials to display the flag

Editorial Note: The President's remarks of Sept. 14, 1981, on signing Proclamation 4857, are printed in the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* (vol. 17, p. 968).